

## Manuele Cerutti

(Turin, 1976)

*L'attesa delle regole*, *Lettera al padre* and *Il sospetto* are three small paintings produced in 2013 by Manuele Cerutti, a Turinese artist who ever since his academy years has chosen painting as his sole means of expression. His works, small in size and with a limited palette of colours, are meagre representations of apparently insignificant everyday objects. Nails, ladders, spoons, rocks, jars and gardening tools are portraits abandoned in some corner of his studio, against a background lacking in details and which is lost in the neutral tones of greys and browns. Abstracting them from their original context, the artist manages to give shape to suspended visions that reject the concepts of time and space and the scale ratio chosen to reproduce them. His gaze, as if captured by some strange spell, settles on those objects, abandoned or chanced upon during his wanderings around the city or along mountain paths, and it is due to this attraction that the most banal and everyday objects acquire the dignity to be represented and are ultimately raised to the central position in the painting.

Cerutti's is a slow and painstaking painting process, mindful of the minimal variations of natural light inside the studio where he works, and not without second thoughts, often noticeable even on the final canvas. Far from the overabundance of visual stimuli that contemporary reality produces and discards continually, his research prefers to focus on the small objects that lie around him in the attempt to identify a peculiar essence, if not an outright sense of subjectivity. However, this does not imply their transformation into entities animated by the artist's imagination or indeed that of the viewer, but rather the possibility to emancipate them from the relationship of use that subordinates them to the needs of man. With the help of non-explanatory titles that hint at a profound mental elaboration on Cerutti's part, the objects painted no longer serve the function they were destined for originally, and may at last experience a free existence on the canvas. In these works, they acquire a physical dignity and an expressive potency comparable to that of the illustrious figures in the paintings of the old masters. We might take *Ritratto di Eroe III* (2014) as an example, where the role of the noble knight in armour is played by a column of corks with metal utensils stuck into them. The human presence is not excluded from this new world of things, but it is clearly limited and secondary: the few figures that appear there come across as clumsy and out of place, and suffer from no longer being the main object of interest. Cerutti himself is depicted standing in *Liturgies* (2016) as he maintains a contorted position in the attempt to hold a chair balanced on his shoulders. We are before the paradoxical consequences of this research: in an upside-down world, man relinquishes his central role and accepts that same subordinate purpose which was previously attributed to the chair.

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